

**Strength Through Unity: Report of the National Conference
of Public Housing Tenants, Ottawa, May 22-24, 1971**

Published for the Conference by the Canadian Council on Social Development, Ottawa
July 1971

STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY

Report of the
National Conference of
Public Housing Tenants

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VANCOUVER HOUSING INTER PROJECT COUNCIL
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The Canadian Council on Social Development
55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa.
K1Y 1E5
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(Also Published in French)

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of holding a national meeting of the residents of publicly subsidized housing was originated by the Vancouver Inter-Project Council in early 1970. At the request of the Vancouver group, a small meeting of public housing tenants was convened in June 1970 at the Canadian Conference on Social Welfare in Toronto. It was decided there to form a conference planning committee and obtain funds for a national conference.

The Canadian Council on Social Development was asked to help with the arrangements.

In September 1970, representatives of the Vancouver Inter-Project Council, the Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations, and the Ottawa Council of Public Housing met in Toronto to decide on the composition of the Conference Planning Committee. Invitations were extended to ten public housing groups to name representatives to the Committee.

The Planning Committee met for the first time in November in Ottawa. There objectives for a national conference were drawn up. It was decided that the Conference should be held in Thunder Bay in early Spring with each public housing development tenant group being eligible to name a delegate. A six member steering committee was appointed to prepare a budget and a preliminary program; and it was decided that the federal and provincial governments should be asked to fund the Conference on a 75%-25% basis. The 25% provincial contribution was to be divided up among the provinces in relation to their number of expected delegates.

In December 1970, the Steering Committee met in Toronto and prepared budget and program outlines. It was decided to change the site to the University of Ottawa campus for budget reasons. Applications for funding were then sent out.

The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation made a grant in the amount

of \$25,000. Provincial governments made grants as follows: Alberta (\$401), Manitoba (\$513), New Brunswick (\$513), Newfoundland (\$168), Nova Scotia (\$625), Quebec (\$901). The Department of the Secretary of State also made a grant of \$700 towards the cost of simultaneous translation.

As a number of provinces refused to financially support the Conference, a last minute plea was made to labour and church organizations for funds. This netted \$200 from the United Church Board of Evangelism and Social Service and \$200 from the Anglican Church of Canada.

Delegate nomination forms were distributed across Canada. For delegate status, including subsidized travel and accommodation, each nominee had to reside in public housing and obtain the signatures of the president and one other officer of his or her tenant group on the nomination form. Observers were charged a \$25.00 registration fee, with the exception of public housing tenants, staff members of tenant groups, and representatives of private housing tenant associations all of whom were simply charged ~~a nominal \$1.00 fee.~~

On May 8 and 9, 1971, the Planning Committee met in Ottawa to review the delegate nominations and approve the final budget and program. Two weeks later the Conference was on.

Members of the Conference Planning Committee were:

Peter Lawrence, Ottawa Tenant Council of Public Housing (Chairman)

Michael Carson, Toronto, Ontario Housing Tenants Association

Mme Marie Cayer, Montreal, Jeanne-Mance

Mme C. Coulombe, Montreal, Comite des Ilots St-Martin

Donald Davis, Toronto, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations

Robert Donaldson, Windsor West Citizens Organization

Mrs. June Lendrum, Thunder Bay, LaSalle Tenants Association

Mrs. Louise Rossiter, Winnipeg Tenants Association

Richard Saunders, Saint John, Crescent Valley Tenants Association

Paul Shedeger (replaced by W.P. Cross) Vancouver Inter-Project Council

2. Leonard Smith, Halifax, Nova Scotia Public Housing Tenants Association

OPENING REMARKS

May 22, 9:30 a.m.

Peter Lawrence, Chairman, Conference Planning Committee.

I would like to welcome all delegates and observers to this first National Conference of Public Housing Tenants. We are here to discuss the problems of public housing tenants, and come up with solutions.

This is the first time I have spoken to a group of this size; and it's just great that you people come so far to this conference. We on the Planning Committee have been working for nearly a year now to plan this conference. We want to make sure that the Conference goes on that line for people in public housing. We are not here to argue and fight against the government, our landlord. We are the people who know the problems; and it's up to us to develop the solutions.

~~We also keep in mind that we are meeting on a national basis.~~ Public housing in Ontario is the same as in Vancouver, and the same as in the East Coast. We all have the same problems. Therefore I suggest that any resolutions that come out of this conference be applicable on a national basis.

As a citizen and taxpayer of the City of Ottawa, I welcome you to our town. You may be thinking, "Well, you in Ottawa, have it great here. You're real close to these federal government guys!" But really if you folks across Canada think you have a hard time getting through to Ottawa, let me tell you that I've got scars on my knuckles - and that's not from punching people on the nose - it's just from knocking on doors here in Ottawa trying to talk to the bureaucrats and politicians.

The Conference Planning Committee has done a damn good job in the last year. Also the Ottawa tenants who organized the car pool and the social event for this evening, have been working hard. The government says,

"Before we can fund your group, you must get people involved." Well, citizens in the Ottawa public housing are involved, and you people across Canada are demonstrating your involvement and commitment by coming to the conference. On behalf of the Planning Committee, I welcome you to the City of Ottawa and the first National Conference of Public Housing Tenants.

Mike Carson, President, Ontario Housing Tenants Association.

Brothers and sisters, I'm real glad to see you down here today. We are not here to condemn the original concept of the public housing program - something that was thought to be honourable and an answer to specific needs. But we can condemn those who have manipulated the housing program in a manner that shows contempt not only for the tenants, but also for the taxpayers across Canada who provide the money.

Literally millions of taxpayers' dollars are wasted through inefficiency and mismanagement. ~~Tenants - who are also taxpayers - are obligated to~~ make the public aware of this. We are here though to plan a program of construction and not destruction. By achieving more control over our own environment, we can eliminate much of the inefficiency and waste in public housing.

In some provinces, the housing authorities have had the foresight to consider the tenants and taxpayers at large in policy decisions. But in other provinces, housing authorities have pursued policies designed to create confusion, waste, and even chaos by erecting asphalt jungles with the built-in obsolescence of the automobile assembly line and with little concern for the families who must reside in them or the taxpayers pockets that are continually being dipped into to rectify errors.

That all Canadians should be concerned about public housing policies was recently made more evident in Ontario. In secret inter-office Ontario Housing Corporation memos that were tabled in the Ontario legislature and

published by the news media, it was divulged that Ontario public housing tenants have rental arrears of approximately \$.75 million. One of the reasons for this, according to a senior OHC officer, was a faulty computer system. What will shock the taxpayer are OHC's instructions that where a tenant is in rental areas, OHC will match his payments dollar for dollar in order to clear the books. In other words a family \$400 in arrears need only pay \$200 and OHC will contribute the other \$200 to write it off. Is this good management? This would put a private company out of business immediately. Tenants who pay their rent are not happy with the situation, and those tenants who stand to gain from this shocking mismanagement are not proud for what is happening.

The vast majority of tenants are honest people who are concerned with their own community and are more than willing to make their just contribution to society. Many of us who are victims of the housing system have come here seething with anger and the frustration of trying to cope with ~~an inefficient and often inhumane system. Anger itself can help to achieve~~ the success of this conference, but we must not let ourselves grow too bitter over what has been happening in the public housing system.

Although this is the first National Conference of Public Housing Tenants; it is not the first conference from which good resolutions concerning public housing are likely to emerge. The Pointe-Claire workshop, the Poor Peoples Conference, and the Ontario Welfare Council Conference, among others across the country, all brought forth good resolutions concerning public housing. Unfortunately, all these resolutions seem to be in limbo; nobody seems to know where they are or what's been done about them. We must ensure that the resolutions that emerge from this conference are followed through to their logical conclusion.

"Strength Through Unity" is the theme of our conference. By working together towards common goals for the benefit of public housing tenants and the taxpayer at large, by putting forth every personal and group effort to

achieve our goals, and by ignoring or even ostracizing people who for their own personal gain would throw obstacles in our path, we can achieve strength through unity. We are all here for one purpose: to provide more benefits, not only for public housing tenants across Canada, but for our entire country.

FEDERAL INITIATIVES AND RESPONSE

May 22, 2:00 p.m.

Address by The Honorable Robert Andras, Federal Minister Responsible for Housing.

Well ladies and gentlemen I think its a great thing to be here together. I think what we're really here to do is to join forces, to argue with each other on different points in the process of establishing your right to make choices about your own future. I've been doing a lot of thinking in the last couple of years and an awful lot of talking about the choices Canadians in general should be making about the way they want to live and the better opportunities for their choices to get registered in the whole process of decision making.

And I think that, among many other things, is still the main role that I ~~want to inject into my new responsibilities as the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.~~

I want to help in any way I can, work out ways by which we all at various levels whether they are income levels or institutional levels can exercise some kind of direction and some kind of choice over the kind of homes - the kind of accommodation - the kind of environment - the kind of atmosphere in which we want to live and not just be told by somebody else what one can or one can't do, because the choices that I'm talking about really must be your choices.

Now you've organized and you've come to Ottawa on this occasion. And it really is an historic meeting in Canada and I think we can realize how impossible to visualize a national conference of public housing tenants - how impossible it would have been to even think about in Canada as recently as five years ago. And I can only add that it's taken far too long to get this underway.

Choices and wishes and hopes and complaints and grievances and beefs and demands have to be communicated in order to have any real effect. Your beefs and your demands and your grievances and your hopes and your wishes and your advice and your views have to be communicated to governments, and if I can get in a plug, I think governments and other administration have to communicate back and explain frankly the difficulties of doing this or the wish and desire to do that and the reasons why things sometimes don't work out in the best way. And that kind of exchange is surely the civilized way to do all our business.

That is to exchange ideas and to begin to exercise choice so I want to know as factually and completely as possible, personally I want to know how you feel, what your major worries are and then see if we can't work out better ways to make your views effective. So I'm only going to talk briefly here today and then I hope we can get an exchange going with each other.

Now I guess I should start off with trying to get across what I can do for you. What can I tell you, even starting off in that light of what I can do for you turns me off a bit because the idea of a government person or a Minister or anybody else always on the kick of what can I do for you seems to me that very theme is part of the problem. We are always standing here in a sort of superior attitude saying what are we going to do for those people rather than I think what is our proper role of what can we do together with them.

I think you get tired of the paternalism. Listening to people telling you what they're going to do for you. And I get tired of hearing it too and yet I have to admit in the same breath that it's darn difficult and it's very hard to get away from the habit. In hard practical terms it's often much easier and maybe more efficient, by some definitions of efficiency in government in positions of so-called authority, to simply do things and manage things and run things rather than to mess around with people.

Because people can be pretty awkward. For some reason they might not agree with you and that always kind of upsets you so it's hard to deliberately set out to blur the distinctions between authority, between the them and the us, and the we and the they and so on and yet I think in this country more and more that's exactly what we've got to try and do. And if I can presume to judge what is fundamental to the way you feel about life, that's what you're insisting on. Your saying, you know, listen to me, listen to us, we're tired of having our lives run in such detail by somebody else.

Well we've tried to go down the road of fuzzing this issue of doing things for people and to listen more to both sides of all questions. We have a group of guidelines for public housing for instance that we at the Federal level suggested thirteen months ago, guidelines that we hoped to see develop across the country and I've had brought here today copies of the speech I made to Parliament about thirteen months ago on the Federal views on public housing, rental scales, tenant participation and whole host of things.

Those speeches are here and I'm quite ready to expose myself so that you can pin me down if you wish on where we've gone wrong and made no progress or too little progress on this suggestion or that suggestion. The real answer is, with regard to the guidelines in the speech I made in the House on public housing that we've won on some, made some progress on others, and on too many we are finding it frustratingly slow going. I'm not saying this is an excuse, I'm saying it realistically so we all know perhaps what we are up against.

Just before lunch I was talking to one gentleman here who was talking about the confusion of jurisdiction between different levels of government. And the same thing came up at the luncheon discussions and I have to live with this all the time and - so do you. It's a difficult thing to move anything in Canada when so many levels of government and ingrained sets of thinking

are involved.

And I'm sure that many of you who took any time to read parts of that speech that I've made available today in my speech of thirteen months ago would ask me where the progress really has been - particularly when I said the following, and I'm quoting directly from my own remarks - so if anybody has ever set themselves up for disaster - I'm doing it right now. I said, "I'm convinced that giving tenants some voice in the administration of their project is a matter of social justice and it would help to encourage a new and healthier outlook all around and remove a major cause of many of the difficulties we have experienced to this time."

Well, that was quite a statement so where are we at on that one? Well we are nowhere near where I would like to see us be, some progress has been made but not much and not nearly enough. And we at the Federal level as you know, I think, have to do everything we do in public housing particularly and in housing generally, through the provinces and through the municipalities. And with a few exceptions on this question of tenant participation we haven't met much will to improve the situation.

In that speech I made thirteen months ago I also said this. "Duly constituted public housing tenant associations will be assisted with grants. As these groups develop it is apparent that for the most part they are reasonable, articulate and informed and this kind of self-help activity deserves to be encouraged." Well a progress report of which I'm not very proud is that two tenant groups have been funded to date, five more from western Canada are in the mill and all I can say at the moment is that I have reason to expect that this pace will pick up but so far it has been grindingly slow.

I mentioned that we have to deal through provincial and municipal governments in these matters but perhaps it is to some degree our fault at the Federal level because we are certainly committed publicly to helping fund

tenants organizations and being responsive to you in other ways. But maybe we haven't pushed it hard enough with the provinces and if that is so, and I rather suspect it may be, you have my undertaking that CMHC will include this aspect much more firmly and aggressively in specific negotiations with provincial and other housing authorities.

But I think I would also have to be candid and say it's very doubtful it would work if we attempted to push this down anybody's throats because we don't have the primary jurisdiction; the administration of public housing is in fact, provincial. And I might just take a minute to - for those of you who might not have had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the way public housing funding takes place - do it now.

We have two main programs under the National Housing Act by which federally in cooperation with provinces the capital fund for public housing is provided. One is a loan arrangement from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation where we lend the provincial housing authority in the case of Ontario, Ontario Housing Corporation, in the case of Quebec, Quebec Housing Corporation and there is a comparable provincial housing authority in each other province. We lend them 90% of the money required to build public housing and they and their municipalities put up 10% of the capital and that loan is made over a period of fifty years and the interest rate is low at the moment about 7½%. In that scheme the rent-to-income scale applies for the people who are in those projects and whatever shortage there is between the rent paid and all the operating costs is shared 50% by the Federal government and 50% by the provincial governments.

The other scheme is somewhat similar its a 75 - 25 split which is not a loan but a totally owned project federally-provincially and in that case we share 75, we pay 75% of the subsidy and the province 25%.

I just mention this so that you will see that although we put up federally a great deal of the money, the fact is that constitutionally the provincial

housing corporation or the provincial government administer. They have really, legally and constitutionally, the final say in what happens so we are financially supportive and let's face it we probably pack a fair amount of the punch and leverage in the fact that we put up quite a bit of money but I don't think we can ram things down their throat. And I think we have to persuade rather than use the baseball bat, it's a little slower that way but perhaps it's got its benefits as well.

This I'm saying really in the light of tenants association grants funding, because it would be our hope that we can work out deals with the provinces whereby some funds would be made available to duly constituted tenants associations by project or by community or by city and the cost of that would be borne as part of the operating cost of the particular public housing project to which it applied and the 50-50 subsidy sharing depending on the scheme that it was operating under.

~~We're suggesting this but we haven't had a great rush of enthusiasm as yet.~~ Maybe you can help us stir up a few things there.

Well I've been kind of wearing a hair shirt a sort of a 'mea Culpa' is that the word? And now I'm going to do a little bit of boasting if you'll let me because I think we have done and are certainly doing some worthwhile things in this whole field and I can tell you that we are trying to be responsive. We do have power at the Federal level in this field but only so much and I have tried to explain where it really begins and ends.

I think you should exert leverage and we'll help you do that and I think the evidence of saying we'll help you do that is the fact that you're here today with a reasonable degree of Federal assistance compared to assistance from other sources. But I also think you've got to look closer to home, perhaps put a little pressure on there. And governments respond to initiatives, some of us foolishly like to look forward to getting elected again although I sometimes wonder why - but that's what the game is all about.

We will respond to initiatives. We respond through a process of thoughtful and well-planned and effective meaningful steps I'm not just talking about tokenism of putting tenants or poor persons on boards or housing authorities. If they are going to go on I hope they're going to go on with full voice and full authority.

So I think you're here to put pressure on and I think that's what your here for. We are trying to do our best. I think governments at any level try to do that. You may disagree from time to time and think this government has this philosophy or another government has that philosophy, but I think we are all trying in our own way to do our best.

We can be moved and we can move. It's always too slow but again I want to in closing make this point, that the fact that you're here at a national conference is indicative of fairly large shift in the thinking of governments.

For one thing until fairly recently in Canada there simply weren't enough public housing tenants to organize or go anywhere.

We've built a lot of public housing units in the last few years more than half of them in the last two years. More than half the public housing units in existence in Canada now were built or committed in the last two years and we intend to continue to fund the program at this rate in the future. We have managed to improve some.

In some ways the rental scale, and I anticipate I'll be hearing a bit about that after I stop talking, the scale of rentals has been lowered in cooperation with most provinces since the guidelines of thirteen months ago. In our proposals the number of children in a family were to be taken into consideration in setting rents, additional allowances were to be accorded working spouses, wives, heads of one-parent families and so on. There has been fairly general movements throughout the provincial administrations along those lines.

We also urged in the guidelines I announced about thirteen months ago that

the leases that you would have about your property would be two-year leases instead of month-by-month. And I was hopeful that we get two years firm and if incomes went up within that two years there would be no increase in rent and on the other hand if incomes went down there would be an immediate response to adjust downwards.

Thanks for that thirteen month delayed applause because I Haven't really won that battle either. I don't think any province has adopted the two-year lease some have gone to a year though so, you know, you shoot for the moon and hit the tops of the trees I guess. But don't be too impatient I don't want to recommend that.

The idea there of course was to give a two-year period in which you could get a chance to get the dental bills paid, the grocery bills paid and some of the debts cleaned off and you could save a little dough and get out of public housing if it were possible. Well I've got some more boasting notes here that I don't think I will bore you with except to end up by saying that we need to be helped to help you and I very much mean that. And I would be very keen to get an exchange of views going and try to answer any questions or handle any suggestions you make from the floor for awhile anyway.

ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

May 23, 9:30 a.m.

Address by Tony Henry, Director, National Tenants Organization, U.S.A.

You don't know how much of a pleasure it is for me to have the opportunity to speak to you in Canada. I am reminded of a day in January of 1969 when about two hundred tenants gathered in Chicago, Illinois, to talk about tenant problems in the United States, and out of the conference grew the National Tenants Organization. Today, the National Tenants Organization in the United States includes both public and private housing tenants; and we have approximately 225 affiliate organizations located in thirty States and about one hundred cities. Together those groups represent approximately half a million tenants.

If you are going to develop a strong tenants organization, you have to really represent and know your people. Often a group of five or six people in a housing development will meet among themselves, decide that they represent everybody, and then go on to form an organization which maybe other people will occasionally attend. This little group might even get something accomplished; but then someone else will come along and say: "You don't really represent us." Eventually they will find that a new organization has grown up underneath them and so you end up with two competing tenant organizations. This is the kind of problem we have seen frequently in the United States. It has to be resolved by holding elections to determine which group really represents the people.

If you are going to form a strong tenant organization in public housing, I suggest that you begin by canvassing people door to door in your building and finding out their needs. Then have a meeting in someone's apartment to toss around some ideas, get the feelings of your neighbors, and some feedback on problems as they see them. The person whose apartment you meet in will feel more committed to your organization and cause. It's also easier to get neighbors to come to an informal session, where perhaps coffee and tea can be served, than to come to a large meeting in a community centre.

After holding building meetings, you might plan a meeting within the project at some central location - a church or community centre - to pull together all those people who met in the various building meetings and discuss the overall problems they see. Finally, you may want to organize a city-wide meeting to bring together representatives from all the different projects to discuss the problems that people feel they have on a city-wide level.

In any case, it's important to begin at the grassroots, to begin with the people and build from your base. If people aren't interested and don't turn out for your meetings, don't feel terribly disappointed - it just takes a little while. Sometimes you have to wait until something dramatic happens: like perhaps the government will announce a major rent increase. That was a great organizing aid to us in the United States. Every time the rents go up, we are able to build stronger organizations. So, sometimes it takes a little patience to determine when the time is right.

Certainly it's important that you communicate with your people regularly, I would suggest the use of a mimeographed newsletter in the beginning. Let people know what is going on, what is being done, what you are demanding, and what you stand for. You might get children to deliver the newsletter from door to door, or you might leave it with a person who will commit himself to deliver it in his building.

I would also suggest that, as people bring forth problems, ideas, projects, and things that they would like to see accomplished, that you write them down and decide what are your most important goals or demands. Make these very clear and very specific if they are the kind of the demands that should go to the housing authority. Then mimeograph them, get them out to everyone and present them to the housing authority.

One of the difficulties that we often find occurs when tenants want to make the housing authority do something, but they are not clear about what it is, except in very broad general terms. So the tenants move into a generalized discussion with the housing authority, and allow the authority to organize their ideas for them, according to the way the authority would like to see

things done. You might go in and say, "We think that the lease that we have is no good and want a better one." So, the housing authority people will say, "Well, what do you want in the lease?" If you don't have any ideas, they will quickly suggest some for you which will achieve little in the way of real change.

I urge you to make your demands clear and specific. For example: "We feel that rents should be such and such, that people should not be evicted without just cause, that there should be so many janitors, that the tenants should be able to select the managers of every development, etc." And then, working with clear and specific demands, you can judge your real progress. You will probably begin by presenting your demands to the director of the housing authority, and you will be able to get some sense of how far you might progress by his immediate reaction.

The director may refuse to receive your demands on the grounds that you don't exist. One of the most frequent responses of a housing authority director is not to acknowledge that he has received demands from any tenant group. When a reporter comes and asks, "What do you think about the demands that your tenants are making?" he will very often respond, "What tenants organization? Why, there is no tenant organization here, those are just a few rabble rousers and agitators!" He will continue to take that position until the day you show up with two hundred people in his office and refuse to leave. Then he will generally acknowledge that there is in fact an organization; although he will claim it's not representative. The housing authority director may receive your demands at that point and say he will take them into consideration.

But you should not stop with the director. The most effective tactic we have found in the United States for getting our demands met has been that of going to the housing authority board. In the U.S., there is usually a housing authority board of commissioners of five people at the local level, most of whom have never lived in public housing, don't know anybody in public housing and don't even like public housing that much-- but they are responsible for making the policies. Well, since they don't live

there and don't know what's going on, the policies are usually in fact made by the director. He suggests to the commissioners what the policies ought to be and they, believing that he is a good director, follow his suggestions. Usually the commissioners are unaware that tenants are dissatisfied until the day that two hundred tenants show up at their board meeting.

There is a great deal of shock, a great deal of resistance but, generally, we have found that housing authority board members are people who can be reached more easily than the director. You can work on the board members; you can pull them aside and talk with them outside of the board meetings. This way, you can sometimes get them to order the director to do things that you would like to have done. If the board members are reluctant to do that, the most effective tactic is, as I said, to show up at a meeting with a large number of people and demand to be heard. Sometimes, the response will be, "You're not on the agenda." But of course you will say: "Well, we live here, we know what our problems are, and we want to be heard." And you stay there and demand to be heard until they eventually let you speak, and then you speak on and on until they understand your position and agree with you, otherwise they won't get much business accomplished. Of course, if the board members try to hold secret meetings (it's often quite difficult to find out where their meetings are taking place) then you should show up with a massive number of people and the press to point out that these people, who are supposed to be serving the tenants, are actually afraid of tenants and thus prefer to meet in secret.

In the U.S., through this kind of tactic, many groups have been able to get things like new leases, new grievance procedures, and new policies and regulations in their housing authority. They have sometimes ended up turning the housing authority board against a director who was refusing to move on the demands of the tenants, because he understood that he had been hired to play God, and because he thought that the housing was his to do with as he wanted.

Certain problems have their base, not in the local housing authority but in the policies of the provincial government. I would suggest that you do the kind of thing we are just beginning to do in the U.S., that is, form provincial tenant organizations and work on your provincial legislators to get laws that meet your needs. Also work on the provincial housing corporation, in the same way that you would work on the local housing authority. We have had limited success in the U.S. with state tenant organizations proposing legislation and getting it through the state legislature. There has been some success in Massachusetts, some in Rhode Island, and some in Michigan; however, we feel that if we can build strong organizations, a great deal more could be achieved.

If the question of legitimacy of your tenants organization comes up, or if you find that you are competing with an older body that has been mainly a social organ for many years or a tenant council that was set up by management to approve whatever the housing authority does, I suggest that you demand that elections, supervised by a neutral body, be held. In the U.S., many housing authorities, seeing that the National Tenants Organization was being created, decided that they would get ahead of the game. They would call together a few friendly tenants and say: "We would like you to form a tenants organization so we'll give you a little office space, pay some of your expenses, and we'll even give you recognition." At first, the director of the housing authority would actually attend the meetings of the new tenants organization. After the group is moving on its own and sponsoring teas and trips, the director would send letters of commendation, that the chairman of the groups would regularly read at the beginning of each meeting to show that they are really doing the right thing.

You might come along to this sort of so-called tenant group and say: "That's not the way it's supposed to operate at all. We're supposed to demand that things be done right." But you would find that the group, instead of accepting your position, will decide that your position is the wrong one - so you end up with a battle. Where elections have been held

the more aggressive tenant organizations have generally won the election so I wouldn't be afraid to call for an election if you find yourself in competition with management - dominated tenant groups.

You should always try to develop good relations with the press because they will be your greatest ally, or, if you established bad relations, your greatest enemy. If the press wants to attend a meeting that you are holding, I would suggest that you allow them in because if you don't then you will turn reporters against you and get an angry article the next day about a secret meeting. Generally, if you are like tenant organizations in the United States, even though you think what you do is very important and that no one should know about it, it's generally not that important and everybody knows about it right after the meeting anyway. By the way, if you're planning on surprising the housing authority, I would suggest that if you have more than ten people in the meeting, five minutes after the meeting the housing authority director will know about your plan.

I would urge you to work also on getting good national legislation and ~~policies to aid you in dealing with the local housing authorities and to~~ obtain more advantageous positions for tenants. To do this, you are going to need to develop at some point a national tenant body. In the U.S., we found that many of the problems we faced grew out of national policies and not just local housing authority decisions. The National Tenants Organization, after disrupting the operation of the federal government ~~several times~~ is now firmly involved in the policy-making process at the national level. Before circulars and regulations go out that affect public housing tenants, we are generally sent copies in advance and asked to comment on them. We also have access to public housing decision makers and are able to talk with them about our problems and receive a fairly favourable response.

In getting legislation through Parliament, if you are organized on the national level, you can decide what type of legislation you want and then use your local organizations to contact Members of Parliament and say to them: "We're from your constituency and feel that you ought to be doing

such and such." Letters, telegrams, and telephone calls are very effective even when they are coming from a fairly small group of people.

There are things that you may want to do if all those strategies fail. One, of course, is the rent strike. We generally regard a rent strike as a last resort type of thing that is sometimes more effective when threatened than when actually in progress. Therefore we will exhaust the other strategies that I have mentioned, including demonstrations such as picketing or sit-ins, before moving to the point of withholding rent. This is because rent strikes are difficult to organize. People who are going to withhold rent have to feel as upset as you do about how things are going, but generally they don't because they haven't given much thought to the problems they face and how they can be resolved.

But, successful rent strikes have been carried out in the United States. In St. Louis, Missouri, they began a rent strike in January 1969 which ~~ended in October of that year.~~ The tenants were demanding a reduction of rents (in St. Louis at that time they averaged 40 per cent of income), tenant seats on the housing authority board, the firing of the housing authority director, and that the tenants be allowed to select a new director as well as project managers. The tenants withheld approximately \$400,000 in rent. The strike ended when the mayor forced the board of commissioners of the housing authority to resign and appointed a new board, which was selected by the tenants and composed of two public housing tenants and three non-tenants. The new board hired a new director, proceeded to reduce the rents to a maximum of 25 per cent of income, and formed a new tenant organization called the Tenants Affairs Board. Now the Tenants Affairs Board and the new Board of Commissioners together are making policies for the housing authority. Currently, our biggest rent strike is in Newark, New Jersey, which has some of the worse public housing in the nation partly because of the influence of the Mafia who drain money out of public housing. They have a very large payroll of people who are doing no work but who are relatives of persons with high

positions in the housing authority. Tenants in Newark have been withholding rent for a year; they have withheld over \$1 million to date. The federal government sent in a study team that generally supported the tenants, so it looks as though tenants are going to win this rent strike as well. I should mention that both the St. Louis and Newark rent strikes started out very small, with about 100 families participating, but grew as the strike continued and nobody got evicted.

If you are going to move to a tactic like a rent strike then make sure that your demands are large enough to justify the tactic. One thing that really hurts is when tenants organize a demonstration or call a rent strike and all they are demanding is new tiles for the kitchen floor. If you are going to move to an aggressive tactic, then you should be demanding control of the housing authority. To some people this will sound like an odd kind of demand but actually you will find that the public is very understanding and tolerant of the position that the people who live in the housing know their problems best, and therefore can probably do a better job of managing that housing than the absentee political appointees.

So, your demands should be in terms of control when you move to a tactic of the magnitude of a rent strike. Then you might end up in a position like those tenants in St. Louis who, after a year of struggle, now (they made a lot of mistakes when they first took over) have finally settled down to a good working pattern and are really making major improvements in public housing.

I would also recommend that your tenant organization relates to private housing tenants. In the United States, our pattern has been that there will be organizations of public housing tenants as well as many organizations of private housing tenants, perhaps relating to one landlord or one large building, but they will come together in an umbrella group or a local federation called a "metropolitan tenants organization" or a "city-wide tenants union". This way, public and private housing

tenants can support each other, get people out for joint demonstrations or meetings, draw on each other's political power. On the state-wide level in the U.S., these city-wide federations are now forming state tenant organizations.

The National Tenants Organization is composed of tenants from both public and private housing. I believe that this will be very important in the long run, because the kinds of solutions that will have to be found for the people who live in low and moderate-income housing will probably involve the private sector getting major subsidies from the government. The distinction between public and private housing may well gradually disappear over a period of years so that, eventually, when one uses the term "public housing" or "private housing", one may just be talking about where the title lies, and not about how much subsidy is received or what rights the people have who live there.

~~I would like to close by mentioning some of the things that we have been~~
able to accomplish over the past year and a half since the National Tenants Organization was created, using these kinds of tactics.

First of all, when NTO started, there was no ceiling on public housing rents in the United States. I have mentioned St. Louis where rents averaged 40 per cent of income; I say "averaged" as some people were paying more than that. We had the case of one little old lady with a son who was receiving \$90 a month in old age payments, but paid a rent of \$100 a month, because they were renting "by group" in St. Louis public housing. Other cities had elderly people paying 30 per cent and 40 per cent of their incomes in rent. We organized to get a law passed that would set a ceiling on rents in public housing. We were successful and now the rent ceiling is 25 per cent of income, the same as you have in Canada. But, we provide a lot of fairly liberal deductions like; you may deduct from your income \$300 for each dependent - that's from your annual income. It doesn't matter whether the dependent is a child or

an adult. You may also deduct major medical expenses and you do not include the income of any member of the family who is attending school on a full-time basis. By the way, this 25 per cent ceiling applies to everyone. There are also no longer any minimum rents in public housing in the United States. If your income is zero, your rent is zero. If your income is \$4 a month, your rent is \$1 a month.

We were also concerned about local housing authorities who complained that they didn't have enough money to provide adequate maintenance, and this was why services were so poor and buildings had so many housing code violations. We were able to get a law passed to rectify this. Today, the U.S. federal government for the first time will pay local housing authorities the difference between the rents they collect and the money that is needed for adequate operation. Again, this took a great deal of organization on our part.

We were also able to get a new national lease and a new grievance procedure required for all public housing tenants. The lease includes provisions such as if there are conditions that endanger health and safety in your dwelling, you do not have to pay rent. Rats, for example, endanger your health and safety.

Also, the housing authority now cannot evict you without just cause; and they have to be able to prove just cause, not only to the courts, but also before an impartial panel if the tenant elects to use the grievance procedure. There are also other provisions that will benefit tenants. Unfortunately, local housing authorities are not very happy with these events and a number of them have now joined together to sue the federal government to stop enforcement of the new grievance procedure. We are looking forward to the fight and feel a little funny about being on the side of the Establishment for once!

We are also now trying to get the new lease and grievance procedure

extended to all subsidized housing in the United States - not just public housing, but private housing that receives federal aid. This should be accomplished by the end of this year, and then probably the National Association of Real Estate Owners will be suing the federal government!

Now the NTO is working on a task force to define tenant participation in management of public housing, so we also hope to have new guidelines on this before the end of the year. Our long-range goal is, of course, tenant control over the operation of public housing. We believe that tenant councils should be able to make all the necessary policies, approve the hiring of staff, and generally operate public housing. It's our position that when this is done, we'll have much better public housing than exists today.

PANEL ON ACTION STRATEGIES FOR TENANT GROUPS

May 23, 11:00 a.m.

Moderator: Mme C. Coulombe, President,

St. Martin's Blocks Committee, Montreal

GAETAN BIANCAMANO - Metropolitan Montreal Tenants Association

The discussion of means to attain the goals aimed at by tenant groups requires a clear definition of the social, economic and political situation in which tenant action will develop. My own analysis will constantly refer to the prevailing situation in the Metropolitan Montreal area.

It is necessary to recognize, in the first place, that housing is a primary social, economic and physical need and that both tenants and landlords do, in fact, exist. It so happens that in Montreal, because of economic and cultural factors, 73 per cent of the population are tenants. These people pay an average of 23 to 25 per cent of their gross monthly salary for housing, the average rent in Montreal being \$85 per month in 1969. When so much is paid for housing, unavoidable restrictions are imposed on other consumer areas such as food, clothing, health, prescribed drugs, recreation... a state of things which spells underdevelopment.

On the other hand, there prevails in Montreal a severe shortage of family housing at reasonable prices. The tenant's choice is limited: he has either to reduce spending on other needs or else accept housing well below normally acceptable standards. As a general rule, he cannot afford to become a homeowner.

To somewhat alleviate the situation, the federal government is providing funds for low-income housing programs, that very often are situated in distant and isolated areas and the provincial and municipal governments are establishing programs of subsidized housing that, more

often than not, constitute social ghettos. As to private enterprise, it is continuing to serve a socio-economic class that is the least affected by the problem. The cooperative and condominium systems are, at this stage, still too recent to properly evaluate. As a result of this situation, we find that there is a multitude of owners - the federal government (CMHC), the municipal housing authority, trusts, small landlords, coops, and sometimes non-profit organizations.

The important thing to note at this juncture is that, whatever the action or strategy developed, it must not aim at or result in a conflict between landlords and tenants. Public housing tenants, whether municipal or provincial, are not in a state of conflict with their landlord when citizens committees are attempting to obtain a better rent scale; the problem they have to face is one of income, it is a socio-economic problem. The same applies when the average tenant in search of housing has to sign a "dishonest" lease; his problem stems from a socio-economic situation.

Consequently, it is not just a change in the landlord-tenant relationship that must be aimed at but rather a change in the socio-economic situation. Change in the landlord-tenant relationship is only a means, among many others. The goals should not be simply to improve the tenant's circumstances but to satisfy the normal aspirations of the whole population.

Now, change in the social and economic system is only fundamental when it occurs from the grassroots upwards. Therefore, the goal should be on building citizen leadership and participation. In this way, new broad solutions to problems will emerge with the help of experts that will compel social, economic, and political organizations to adjust faster and more efficiently to the needs of an underdeveloped population.

Role of a tenant's association

A broad tenants' association requires a permanent structure to identify

a field of action for change. It is therefore only a service, a tool, a pool of technical resources (material and human) to serve grassroot groups by helping them identify their needs and defend their rights.

A tenants' organization must work to improve the existing conditions of tenants. This implies a concentration of efforts on the special problems which plague tenants. But I believe that a wide-ranging tenants organization, metropolitan or otherwise, should not restrain its efforts only to tenant problems but must endeavour to discover ways to bring about change in the entire socio-economic system. In this manner, the tenants can organize work together and serve already existing citizen groups. Tenant action should be exercised on all fronts: those of food, health, recreation, work, etc.

There are basically three phases in organizing a tenant association. I shall briefly describe each of them.

First Phase - Communication

This phase constitutes the first contact between the population and a tenant group. Several tactics are utilized in this phase: publicity in the mass media, formal and informal meetings, but above all, the provision of essential services such as an emergency telephone service and a documentation service.

This phase does not intend to promote grassroot activity; it aims, rather, at awakening interest, identifying service opportunities, and identifying the issues. Competence and efficiency are required in these initial contacts. In this phase, small groups may be formed on tenant matters. What can be termed as "tenant cells" will represent the start of a movement to bring together tenants on issues of direct concern, e.g., when three tenants in a triplex decide together to refuse an unjustified increase in rent. These "cells" represent the beginning of a tenant

association.

Second Phase - Politicization

Once the first phase is well advanced, it is necessary to help people develop a consciousness of their situation as tenants. It is what might be considered an initial step of the politicization of the tenants in the sociological sense. It is necessary to assist the tenant to clearly define his socio-economic situation. If specific problems puzzle a tenant, he should be provided with information that will gradually lead him further afield in search of an explanation. Action strategies of this type are countless. For instance, a problem raised on the telephone should be related to wider housing issues.

By means of meetings with grassroot groups (whether citizens committees, food stores, cooperatives, unions, political action committees) basic ~~information should be communicated as efficiently as possible through~~ discussions, pamphlets on legislation, charts that illustrate problems (what we call "capsules"), slide shows and eloquent statistics that define housing problems within a relevant analysis of the socio-economic system.

At all costs, one must avoid isolating socio-economic matters from tenants' problems. It is important that adequate information should be given in order to define, explain and situate tenant action in relation to other activities that aim at fundamentally changing the socio-economic situation.

Third Phase - Action-Involvement

The goal to be achieved at this stage is to obtain public assumption of responsibility for problems experienced by tenants. Everyone in Montreal keeps talking about advocacy at the moment. This method involves certain

people assuming the role of defender and spokesman for grassroot groups. Adequate information and "continuing education" will enable advocates to play their role effectively. They will gradually become information agents for their districts and resource persons to help citizens solve daily problems.

In this stage, a metropolitan tenants association can directly service the needs of newly-formed grassroot tenant groups.

Planning for change must start at the citizen level, and the fundamental action strategy should be to respect existing grassroot groups. Local groups could be the Greek Tenants Association of Ste-Catherine Street, The City of Verdun Tenant Association, or tenant associations based on individual trade union locals or food markets. It is by means of grassroot action and decisions taken by those who lead under-developed lives that it will be possible to succeed in influencing social, economic and ~~political institutions.~~

It is not just a matter of settling tenants matters but one of serving grassroot groups that aim to bring about socio-economic change by working on tenant problems.

LEONARD SMITH - Director, Nova Scotia Public Housing Tenants Association.

I am very happy to have the opportunity to be able to speak to this conference to explain how the Province of Nova Scotia, in the last seven months, has progressed with tenant participation in public housing.

One of the main problems in the Province of Nova Scotia has been complete dictatorship from local housing authorities and the provincial government. So, our organization was formed to try to get out from under this dictatorship by giving tenants some voice in the projects they live in.

At the present time, we have ten local tenant organizations in Nova Scotia. Throughout the province we have only in the vicinity of 2500 public housing units.

The local organizations have exerted a lot of pressure since they have been organized; but in the last few months, we have been able to arrange meetings with local housing authority boards. We have been able to sit down, discuss our problems and we have, I must say, solved a lot of them. However, we found out that by dealing with the local housing authority boards, we only took the first step to the solution of many of our problems. One of the major problems was that the provincial and federal governments were doing a lot of buck-passing with the local housing authority boards. So, out of our ten local tenant groups, a provincial organization was formed. This organization is made up of the president of each local organization, and we obtained provincial incorporation so we could go to the Nova Scotia Housing Commission and try to deal with the problems there.

The first objective for our provincial organization is to establish tenant associations in all the various housing developments. Of course, we have tremendous battles. The housing authorities don't want associations and the provincial government doesn't want associations. But one of the biggest problems we face is fear on the part of tenants. Tenants are scared to come to meetings. They are scared to sign their name to become a member because local managers have threatened: "Join that organization and we'll evict you". So this was our first objective. So far, we have a fair organization, and I'm proud to say that we have anywhere from 75 to 95 per cent of tenants signed up as members.

Our second objective was to protect and extend the rights and services of tenants in public housing developments. Again, tenants didn't have any rights because, as I said at the very beginning, we were under a dictatorship. If the housing authority didn't like the way a tenant

was living, out he went and someone else would be moved in.

You must remember that in Halifax alone the Halifax Housing Authority has over 1,700 applications waiting from people wanting to get into public housing. So you see they can be pretty independent. The Housing Authority can say: "Look, if you don't like what you have here now, we have 1,700 families waiting to go in." So they are using us as a lever. We are trying to break this, seeing that tenants get some rights through forming a strong organization.

To promote organized community activities, it's necessary to have better relations both among tenants and between tenants and management. Well, again we are trying to strengthen relationships by encouraging tenant organizations to sit down with housing authority boards across the province. Again, we get a lot of backlash here: "You guys don't know what you want. You guys are just little guys. You live in there and do as we say." But so far it has been working quite well. We have now fairly regular meetings in all different areas with local housing authority boards. We found out when we first started to meet with boards of directors that a lot of our complaints had never ever reached them.

We are also interested in promoting self-help, home care, and a household budget program for tenants in public housing. Most of the public housing in Halifax are in complete redevelopment areas. This means that a lot of our tenants, who actually lived in slums all their lives, have finally been given a chance to move into a decent home. But we're running into a lot of problems. As you all know, under your lease you have to keep your place clean and in good repair. But a lot of our tenants, through no fault of their own (because they were forced all their lives to live in slums where you couldn't scrub the floors, or wash the walls) are now having problems in looking after their own homes properly. We are trying to help these tenants with their problems. Again, a lot of them are having trouble with budgets and making ends

meet. We are trying to set up programs so that, if these tenants want, we can tell them the best way to get value for their dollar. Many tenants are being bothered by creditors.

We have quite a few other problems that we are trying to deal with. I think the major one we are looking at right now is to secure 50 per cent participation of tenants on local housing authority boards. One housing authority member told me: "As long as I'm chairman of this board, no tenant will ever sit on it." But we are working on this and I hope that within the next six months on every one of our local housing authority boards in Nova Scotia, we'll have 50 per cent tenant participation.

NORMAN BRUDY - Metro Toronto Tenants Association

I would like to bring greetings to this convention on behalf of the ~~Metro Toronto Tenants Association, and to wish you the best of success in your endeavours.~~ I would also like to state at this time that, as a Toronto organization, we are anxious and willing to work in cooperation with all the public tenants organizations in our city to advance both our efforts in this struggle.

I would like briefly to address myself to the theme of this conference - "Strength Through Unity." It seems to me that the delegates and guests have spoken about how to achieve unity in your own project or in your own area; but this doesn't answer the question of how to find the right issue or program to unite your people in order to advance the interests of tenants. Well, I think that we need to also address ourselves to the question of unity on a much wider horizon, that is, unity of all tenants, both public and private, across this great country of ours. It seems to me that the key thing we can unite on is a demand for legislation in the interest of tenants. I would like to say something briefly about this.

First of all, I think we need to quit going around hat in hand when we talk about tenants' needs. We are now becoming the majority of the Canadian population. In the next ten years, we will not only be the majority but we will be the overwhelming portion of the population - about 80 per cent. And in the long-range future, there doesn't appear to be any change in sight. The overwhelming majority of Canadians are going to be tenants. Therefore, how tenants live, how they raise their children, how they are able to provide the quality of life that a Canadian needs, becomes the interest of the majority of the citizens in Canada.

Secondly, I am not a referee in this fight. I think that's important. I'm a participant; I'm a tenant. If I were a referee, I would be greatly concerned whether I am being fair to a landlord or not, no matter what kind of landlord. But I am not a referee - I'm a participant and I'm in the struggle against landlords - and I think we need not be too worried about landlords. They'll look after their own interests; we must defend the interests of the overall majority of Canadians even if this happens to be against the interests of the landlords.

We tenants are organized in many groups and federations; but there are many differences among us. There are even differences with each of our organizations. Now, we don't have to agree with each other; but I would like to appeal to you not to wash our dirty linen in public. If I disagree with any organization's tactics, I will privately talk with that organization. That always reminds me of when I joined the Army. I was considered an agitator a long time ago, so the officer said to me: "Brudy, if you join the Army, would you organize the men if they have complaints?" And I replied: "Sir, you are an officer in the Canadian Army; your job is to see that the men have no complaints so you won't have to worry about me".

In regard to legislation, I think we should try to achieve our unity on

a broad scale, yet also enable local organizations to achieve their aims. Since we have been able to achieve some changes in legislation, now landlords have to deal with us with a little more respect. Landlords have to recognize that we have some rights. If we concentrate on mobilizing first ourselves and then the community as a whole, we can get all the legislation we need. This struggle for decent legislation will become more important as more and more of the apartment blocks with suites for rent are becoming controlled by big multi-millionaire corporations. Our ability to fight these landlords without tough legislation will be limited.

BRUCE YORKE - President, British Columbia Tenants Organization.

I am a representative from an essentially private tenant organization, so it's a great privilege to come all the way from Vancouver to participate in this meeting. It's an historic occasion, and I'm quite sure that we will all remember it as a milestone in developing a movement for tenants rights in this big country.

Mr. Brudy made the point that, as tenants, we constitute the majority of people in Canada. Like him, I also don't draw any distinction between renters in private and public housing. As Mr. Henry indicated this morning, economic forces are going to bring us much closer in the future. I would like to suggest that the main points Mr. Henry made are very applicable in this country, and I would like to give you some indication as to how we have been trying to carry out these practices in British Columbia.

First of all, I think it's very important as a general strategy to have a broad approach: to consider tenants problems from all angles -- from economic, social, recreational and even political approaches. I also think it's very important not to throw all our eggs into one basket, that

we keep as many irons in the fire as we can, so if one tactic doesn't work, we always have other angles to work on.

Next, I believe the question of support for the tenant movement is a very fundamental question and one that we need to give considerable attention to in our work. It was my privilege to be an observer at the last convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, in Edmonton. There, delegates representing one million people publicly went on record as supporting the formation of tenants organizations and offering their help. To the best of my knowledge, organized labour has funded many local tenant groups; this has been particularly true in British Columbia. So, I think it's very important to develop working relationships with other organizations in society.

Mr. Brudy also mentioned another point that I think is fundamental. I am referring to the necessity to have a fundamental law in this country ~~which would facilitate the work of organizing tenants. This is most~~ important. It's true that this would have to be enacted at the provincial scale because of the British North America Act; but I think it could be coordinated on a federal scale. What is basically required here is that there should be no eviction without just cause. The hard core reality of organizing depends upon this so we should keep this in mind throughout the conference.

I want to refer to one situation we have in British Columbia to illustrate how important good legislation is to tenant organizing. In Vancouver, we are now going into the third month of a large scale rent strike. We are fighting probably the second largest landlord in the province, who has something like 2000 units in the City of Vancouver. Because the property management firm lacks a coordinated approach, we have been able to stage a strike and tenants have successfully been able to withhold their rents. There has been a breakaway from the firm on the part of some owners with whom we have reached a collective agreement

independent of the law. We have also demonstrated a lot of public support by instituting a boycott campaign that has succeeded in raising vacancy rates in these apartments from the normal less than 2 per cent to 10 per cent. This has placed tremendous pressure on the landlord to reach an overall collective agreement with us. Now, it's a fact of life that we would not have been able to carry on this strike successfully if the Government of British Columbia had not recently abolished the landlord's previous right to distress for withholding rent.

There's one question that has been close to my heart for a long time, and that is the necessity of forming some sort of overall and cohesive national tenant organization. I think it's a reasonable desire, but we should be very realistic and proceed with great care so that we build the organization solidly. In this regard, I suggest that the organization should be established on a federated basis with both public and private tenant group affiliates. At this stage, it might be best to ~~proceed with the establishment of a continuation committee that could~~ plan this, publish a national newsletter and coordinate information. This might lead to developing a conference of delegates from all public and private tenant groups prepared to build an organization capable of representing everyone who rents across our land.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Passed at May 22, 1971, Plenary Session

Moved by Peter Harrington, seconded by Gordon Potts, that the National Conference of Public Housing Tenants condemn those provincial governments that failed to assist in funding the Conference. CARRIED.

Resolutions Passed at May 24, 1971, Plenary Session

1. (a) Motion was made by Peter Harrington that we set up a pro-tem Working committee to implement the formation of a national tenants' association. Seconded by Rory O'Farrell. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- (b) Motion was made by Richard Saunders that each province elect two members for a Working Committee. Seconded by Rory O'Farrell. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- (c) A motion was made by John Hook that selection of members be by Provincial Caucus. Seconded by A.E. Kelly. CARRIED. (4 Manitoba and 8 British Columbia delegates opposed, 5 delegates abstained).
2. Moved by Marion Anderson, seconded by Mrs. J. Kelly:

Whereas some provinces have monthly leases for public housing tenants, short-term increases in income raise the rental levels, making impossible to resolve economic problems. Therefore, be it resolved that all public housing tenants in Canada have a two-year lease, during the term of which the rent may not exceed that which is set in the original agreement and that a decrease in income bring about an immediate decrease in rent. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
3. Moved by Mary Ritchie, seconded by Mrs. J. Kelly:

Whereas existing leases vary from province to province and do not in all provinces and areas provide adequate protection for public

housing tenants, therefore, be it resolved that a working committee be set up to establish a standard lease applicable to all public housing tenants in Canada, and let that committee be comprised of a majority representation of public housing tenants from every province, together with representation from provincial and federal levels of government. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Resolved that the housing authorities be not permitted to evict any public housing tenant without establishing just cause in the courts. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Moved by the Province of Quebec Workshop:
- (a) It is moved that tenants should be represented by individuals elected by themselves on agencies responsible for the administration of local low-income housing, and furthermore, that tenants should have a representative on the provincial housing corporation.

(b) This proposal will enable citizens to participate in the design of low-income housing, and to supervise the quality of these buildings (including recreation facilities, integrated commercial premises, and sports fields.)

(c) Finally, it is necessary to provide provincial no-interest loans in order to permit citizens to start co-operatives. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Moved and seconded by Workshop on Tenant Participation in Management:

Whereas present and future tenants in public housing have no say on federal, provincial, civic and municipal public housing authorities, commissions and corporations, and

Whereas this has seriously affected development, design and management policies of all public housing in Canada, therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand

immediately an equal number of tenant representatives with equal voting privileges on all authorities, commissions and corporations affecting public housing in Canada, and

Whereas each individual housing project is unique, it is apparent that, aside from general policy, specific policy must be left to tenants' decision. Therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand that tenants be given the option of selecting their own method of management at project level.

This resolution is to be distributed to the Federal Minister Responsible for Housing, The C.H.M.C., all provincial ministers responsible for housing, and all authorities, commissions and corporations affecting public housing in Canada. CARRIED. (opposed - Mr. Cliff Phoenix, London.)

~~7. Moved and seconded by Workshop on Tenant Participation in Management:~~

Whereas the problems presented by present types of public housing have multiplied due to the continuing reluctance of public housing officials to recognize alternative forms of housing, therefore, be it resolved that the National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand that present and future tenants in public housing have the opportunity to choose alternative accommodations (co-op housing, mobile homes, renovating older homes, public housing - including rent-to-own option - subsidization of rents for people on waiting lists for housing, and opportunities for transfer from one municipality to another.) And be it further resolved that all the older projects be brought up to the standards of the new projects.

This resolution is to be distributed to the Federal Minister Responsible for Housing, the C.H.M.C., all provincial ministers responsible for housing and all authorities, commissions and corporations affecting public housing in Canada. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Moved and seconded by Workshop on Tenant Participation in Management:

Whereas certain present administrative policies ignore the housing needs of people (all adults under 65); and whereas the relationship between adults and children is seriously disturbed by present accommodation policy (the adult of single-parent families does not have his own bedroom, children with medical problems do not have their own bedrooms, boys and girls share bedrooms), therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand that present and future tenants should have the right to determine their choice of suitable accommodation to meet their reasonable needs.

This resolution is to be distributed to the Federal Minister Responsible for Housing, C.M.H.C., all provincial ministers responsible for housing and all authorities, commissions, corporations, affecting public housing in Canada. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

~~9. whereas people on low-income do not qualify for provincial government grants as down payment on a home (in B.C. an additional \$500 is needed plus a bank account and solid credit rating);~~

Whereas grants of this nature would add to the present housing stock as well as satisfy the needs of the people; and whereas government costs are high in maintaining group housing, therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants:

(a) request the provincial governments to provide grants to people who do not now qualify to purchase their own homes;

(b) demand the federal government to supply loans at a low interest rate to people who do not qualify for C.M.H.C. loans;

(c) demand the provincial-federal governments explore innovative methods of financing home ownership.

This resolution is to be distributed to the Federal Minister Responsible for Housing, the C.M.H.C., all provincial ministers responsible

for housing and all authorities, commissions, and corporations affecting public housing in Canada, and also to the Minister of Finance, both provincial and federal governments. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. Whereas self-help groups in public housing are dependent upon the tenants' organization, therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants request all provincial governments to bear their share of grants to tenants organizations. ~~Carried~~ CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. Whereas many of the problems presented here are as a result of an antiquated constitution and whereas a vicious circle of buck-passing is created, therefore, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand that continuous negotiations be carried on by the federal and provincial governments until a new Canadian constitution is formulated (which would include a bill of rights). ~~We request that this be done by the end of the next federal/provincial conference.~~

This resolution is to be distributed directly to the Prime Minister, all provincial premiers and forwarded in time for the Federal/Provincial Conference on the Constitution to be held next month. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. Resolved by Ann Vandebos that there should be 50% tenant representation on planning of housing developments, administration, budget and financing. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. Resolved that tenants have the option to be involved in management at the development level; including administration of finance and budget, maintenance, day-care centres, security services and all aspects of community involvement. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

14. Resolved that adequate parking spaces be provided in all public housing developments. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

15. (a) Be it resolved that the future rental scale eliminate our second incomes and children's earnings.

(b) Resolved that the rent scale be a maximum 15% of fixed income for senior citizens in public housing.

(c) Resolved that the federal rent-income scale be based on gross income less income taxes, federal pension, medical insurance, and U.I.C. Be it also resolved that the rent of all tenants receiving social welfare assistance be based on the geared-to-income scale.

(d) Resolved that single-parent families, where the father is the sole support of the family, should be allowed additional benefits - the same as mothers who are the sole support of their families. CARRIED

16. Whereas information is difficult to obtain regarding resources and ~~financing, this Conference requests that C.M.H.C. assume responsibility for preparing a brief outline of resources and finance~~ available in public housing and that this be sent to tenant associations at the earliest opportunity; and comprehensive information regarding same within one month. CARRIED.

17. Whereas more and more funds have to be made available for penal systems and mental health, year after year, we resolve that a program be devised immediately to correct social conditions before these conditions need a cure. Resolved that a committee be formed to investigate existing social agencies as to the services that they should be providing and a report, and that immediate action should be taken to rectify the conditions; that any such committees be set up with 50% tenant representation and that such committees be set up anywhere in Canada as desired by any group of public or private housing tenants.

This is to be directed to federal, provincial and municipal governments

and to voluntary funding agencies. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

18. Moved and seconded by Workshop on Social and Recreation Programs;

Be it resolved that the National Public Housing Tenants Council demand that there must be tenant participation on all levels of the government partnership in public housing with equal voice and voting power in all phases, from the planning of public housing projects through to and including management, with specific regard to recreation and social facilities in present and future public housing projects in Canada. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

19. Moved by Margaret MacDonald, seconded by Mary Crawley:

Whereas there are no on-site facilities in existing public housing projects, be it resolved that this National Conference of Public Housing Tenants demand that fully equipped, on-site facilities (such as day-care, recreation, etc.) be provided immediately in present and future public housing projects, to be managed by the by the respective tenants of public housing, and, whereas that grants are available, that immediate recreational grants be forthcoming shared by federal, provincial, and municipal governments. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

20. Resolved by Myrna Evans that the logical conclusion of tenant participation is home-owning through federal aid and with the federal government constructing more semi-detached and row-housing as opposed to high-rises. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

21. Moved by Gordon W. Potts, seconded by Margaret R. MacDonald:

Whereas low-income tenants of public housing have a fear of being trapped for life in the public housing system; we resolve that public housing units be immediately made available for people of low-income on a

rent-to-own program, with rents being applied to the downpayments, and resold only to public housing authorities, with mortgage payments geared-to-income. CARRIED.

Mrs. June Lendrum, E 45 La Salle Place, Thunder Bay, Ontario (807) 577-6167
Chris Bradshaw, 55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa (613) 726-1865.

Mrs. June Lendrum, a Thunder Bay public housing tenant and member of the Thunder Bay Housing Authority, announced May 31, 1971, that following the National Conference of Public Housing Tenants, May 22-24 in Ottawa, immediate steps are being taken to form a national tenants association.

"The conference was successful beyond our expectations", Mrs. Lendrum said. "It proved that public housing tenants want to and are capable of managing their own affairs. We also know that tenants can make public housing work and that we need much more of it. We now intend to move rapidly to set up our own national body to represent all Canadians who rent, whether they live in public or private housing. We must have all ~~tenants represented because most low-income people still live in pri-~~ vately owned housing."

The plan is to form a Working Committee with two tenant representatives from each province. This committee will prepare a constitution and seek funds for a national tenants association. Once under way, the new organization will publish a regular newsletter, assist in organizing tenant groups across Canada, and put the case of tenants before government bodies. Some provinces have already named representatives to the Working Committee while others are expected to hold provincial meetings soon for this purpose.

The following have been named to a steering committee to plan a meeting of the 20-member Working Committee (Mrs. Lendrum will act as steering committee chairman):

- . Mike Carson, Toronto, Chairman, Ontario Housing Tenants Association.
- . Mme Catherine Coulombe, Montreal, President, St. Martin's Blocks

Committee.

- . Richard Saunders, Saint John, President, Crescent Valley Tenants Association.
- . Leonard Smith, Halifax, Director, Nova Scotia Public Housing Tenants Association.

DELEGATES - DÉLÉGUÉS.

NEWFOUNDLAND

St. John's

St. John's Tenants

Robert Noftal

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown

P.E.I. Tenants Union

Miss Carol Rooney

NOVA SCOTIA

Dartmouth

Lakey Road Tenants Assoc.

Mrs. Mary Crawley

"

Nova Scotia Public Housing
Tenants Association

Leonard P. Smith

Glace Bay

Glace Bay Tenants Assoc.

Mrs. Joyce Stevens

Halifax

Nova Scotia Public Housing
Tenants Association

Frank Hendsbee

"

Mulgrave Park Tenants
Association

Mrs. Alice Detchkoff

"

Uniacke Square Tenants
Association

Douglas A. Skinner

"

~~Bayers - Westwood
Tenants Association~~

~~Mrs. Sylvia Kitley~~

Sydney

North Sydney Public
Housing Tenants Assoc.

Mrs. Violet Young

"

James Street Public
Housing Tenants Assoc.

Douglas Dufour

"

Terrace Street Tenants Assoc.

Glen Gray

Yarmouth

Yarmouth Tenants Assoc.

John L. Doucette

NEW BRUNSWICK

Campbellton

Campbellton Tenants Assoc.

Mrs. Ludger Mazerolle

Chatham

Minimichi Tenants Assoc.

Leonard Lynch

St. John

Crescent Valley Tenants Assoc.

Richard Saunders
Mrs. Richard Saunders

"

Crescent Valley Homemakers
Association

Mrs. Nancy Reid

QUÉBEC

Alma

Comité des Locataires

Philippe Tremblay *

L'Epiphanie

Comité des Locataires
de L'Epiphanie

Ainie Masson

* was not able to attend.

Kénogami	Comité Des Locataires, Place Pont Kénogami	Jean Vandal
Lévis	Association Des Locataires des H.L.M. de Place Louis Fréchette	Jean-Louis Lavoie
"	Association des Locataires Des H.L.M. de l'avenue Pie X	Mme Charlyne G. Lapierre
Montréal	Îlots Campbell	Lucien Chamailard
"	Groupe ment des Citoyens	Mme Marie Gayer
"	Comité des Îlots St. Martin	Mme E. Coulombe
"	Citoyens à Faible Revenu de Jeanne Mance	Roger Croze
"	St. Martin's Blocks Committee	Mrs. Leoma Raso
Québec	L'Association des Locataires de Place Bardy	Mme Claude Bélanger
"	Groupe ment des Locataires de Place Marie de l'Incarnation	Simon Langlois
"	Groupe ment des Locataires de Stadaconna	Roger Bourgeois
St. - Jérôme	Association des Locataires de la rue Ouimet	Leandre Gingras
"	Association des Résidents de Place Prévost	Yvan Tremblay
Trois - Rivières	Comité des Citoyens du Relogement N.D. de la Paix	Michel Alain
ONTARIO		
Brampton	McHardy Court Citizens Assoc.	Vaughn Geldart
Burlington	Sheldon Community Assoc.	Mrs Sally Delogowski
Hamilton	Ralston Manor Tenants Assoc.	C.J. Whitaker
"	Mohawk Gardens Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Christina Marini
London	Allan Rush Community Tenants Association	Cliff Phoenix
Oakville	Elmwood Tenants Association	Mrs. Adeline Ward
Oshawa	Malaga Park Tenants Association	J. Garry Kent
Ottawa	Albion Gardens Tenants Assoc.	Rene Bellefeuille
"	Blair Court Tenants Assoc.	Gerard Latang
"	Ottawa Tenants Council of Public Housing	Mrs. Jewel Kelly
"	Michelle Heights Tenants Assoc.	Henry Albert

Ottawa	Confederation Court Tenants Association	Mrs. Lois Lasalle
"	Pinecrest Terrace Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Joy M. Doyle
"	Rochester Heights Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Dorothy Woito *
"	Russell Heights Tenants Assoc.	Gerard Beauvais
"	Ottawa Tenants Council of Public Housing	Peter Laurence
Peterborough	Denne Crescent Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Vivian Missin
"	Fairbairn-Raymond Public Housing Association	Mrs. Audrey O'Donnell
"	Parkhill Road Public Housing Association	Mrs. Shirley Purtell
"	Fairburn Tenants Assoc.	Ben Christianson
Richmond Hill	Dufferin Court Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Marjorie Fitzpatrick
Sudbury	Sudbury Housing Tenants Assoc.	F. Drolet
"	Sudbury Housing Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Alice Charbonneau
Thunder Bay	LaSalle Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Jean Plummer
	<u>LaSalle Tenants Assoc.</u>	<u>Mrs. June E. Lendrum</u>
Toronto	Ontario Housing Tenants Assoc.	Mike Carson
"	Ontario Federation of Citizens Association	Donald Davis
"	Sheppard Dells Community Assoc.	Mrs. Yvonne Montgomery
"	Alexandra Park Residents Assoc.	Paul Lane
"	Bedford Green Variety Club	Mrs. Alice Ismay
"	Birchmount Community Booster Association	Mrs. Irene Kruger
"	275 Bleeker Street	Mrs. Myrna Evans
"	Blake Street Residents Assoc.	John Wm. Taylor
"	Tenants Assoc. of 325 Bleeker St.	A.E. Kelly
"	375 Bleeker Street Tenants Association	Mrs. Loretta Newell
"	Charles St. Tenants Assoc.	Russ Crossman
"	Don Mount Village Assoc.	Mrs. Lillian Carrigan
"	East Mall Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Maureen Daniel
"	Edgely Tenants Assoc.	Mr. Farrell

Toronto	Scarborough Village Community Association	Mrs. Donna Steeves
"	Janeview Community Association	Mrs. Maria Lance
"	Jane-John Best Tenants Assoc.	W. Petrie
"	Kennedy Park Tenants Progress Association	Gordon W. Potts
"	Lawrence Heights Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Ann Ross
"	Moss Park Apartments Community Association	Mrs. Dianne Elliston
"	Mount Olive Tenants Assoc.	Michael Colpitts
"	York Community Association	Patrick Wilcox
"	Regent Park Community Improvement Association	Budd McCormick
"	Regent Park Community Boosters Club	John Jobin
"	Scarlett Woods Tenants Assoc.	Bruce Middleton
"	Seaton St. Tenants Assoc.	Earnest Raine
"	Shepard Gardens Community Assoc.	Frank Laferla
"	O'Connor Development Community Association	Jacquie Jones
"	Thistletown Tenants Action Group	Mrs. Carol Scott *
"	Warden Woods Action Group	Mrs. Ann Vandebos
"	200 Community Booster Club	Mrs. Mary Ritchie
"	West Mall Tenants Assoc.	J.D. Osterhout
"	Willowtree Neighbourhood Association	Mrs. Rosemary Stanefelt
"	20 Yellowstone Street Tenants Association	John R. Hook
"	Ontario Housing Tenants Assoc.	Peter Harrington
Windsor	Downtown Community Citizens Organization	Robert Crumb
"	Windsor West Citizens Organization	Donald A. Meloche
"	Windsor West Citizens Organization	Robert Donaldson
MANITOBA		
Brandon	Brandon Tenants Association	Mrs. A. Cochran
Portage La Prairie	Portage La Prairie No.1 Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Ellen Dryk

Selkirk	Selkirk Tenants Assoc.	Ross Stevenson
Winnipeg	Burrows-Keewatin Tenants Association	Mrs. Gladys Heintzman
"	Winnipeg Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Louise Rossiter
"	Lord Selkirk Park Tenants Association	Mrs. Carmen Sorenson
"	Lord Selkirk Towers Tenants Association	Mrs. Eva Johnson *
Saskatchewan		
Saskatoon	Saskatoon Tenants	Mrs. Isabelle Conn
Regina	Regina Centers Council	Mrs. Irene Goddu
ALBERTA		
Calgary	Bowness	John G. Little
"	Shaganappi Village	Mrs. Louise Davey
Edmonton	Steele Heights	Larry Flamond
BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Burnaby	Stride Avenue Tenants Assoc.	Charles Berard
Prince Rupert	Mariposa Gardens Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Rose Vomacka
Vancouver	Carolina Court	Meralon Dennis
"	Culloden Court Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Charlotte E. Hughes
"	Grandview Terrace Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Elaine Bethel
"	Killarney Gardens Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Anna Groth
"	Little Mountain Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Marion Anderson
"	McLean Park Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Kurbekoff
"	Nicholson Towers Association	Joe Connor
"	Orchard Park Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Margaret R. MacDonald
"	Ray-Cam Co-Operation Club	Mrs. Judy Stainsby
"	Skeena Terrace Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Betty Carlson
"	Wall Street Tenants Assoc.	Mrs. Cindy Walters
"	Vancouver Inter-Project Council	Mrs. Shirley Card
"	Vancouver Inter-Project Council	W.P. Cross

RESOURCE PEOPLE - PARTICIPANTS DE RESSOURCE

Mrs. Marion Anderson	Little Mountain Tenant Management Committee	Vancouver
Honourable Robert Andras	Federal Minister Responsible for Housing	Ottawa
Michael Andassy	Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Ottawa
Reuben Baetz	Executive Director, Canadian Council on Social Development	Ottawa
Gaeten Biancamano	Le Conseil de Développement Social	Montreal
Robert Boyle	Société d'habitation du Québec	Quebec
Norman Brady	Metro Tenants Association	Toronto
R.M. Clarkson	Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation	Winnipeg
Mrs. June Craig	Ottawa Housing Authority	Ottawa
George Devine	New Brunswick Housing Corporation	
Bill Fisher	Company of Young Canadians	Toronto
Robert Garrod	Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Ottawa
Irving Grossman	Architect	Toronto
Cliff Gwilyn	Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Ottawa
Tony Henry	Director, National Tenants Organization	Washington
Harry Jérôme	Department of National Health and Welfare	Ottawa
Brian Knight	Park Extension Community Corporation	Montreal
Joan Kuyek	former Chairman, Ontario Tenants Association	Sudbury
Donald Kuyek		Sudbury
C. Leclerc	Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Ottawa
Marvin Lipman	Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Ottawa
Paul Lippe	Le Conseil de Développement Social	Montréal
Tim Reid	Member of the Ontario Legislative Assembly	Ottawa
Marjaleene Repó	Editor, <u>Transformation</u>	Toronto
Kathleen Shannon	National Film Board	Montreal

* Fernand Vachon	Société d'habitation du Québec	Quebec
Bruce Yorke	President, British Columbia Tenants Organization	Vancouver

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES -SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVES

Conference Co-ordinator/ Coordonateur de la Conférence	Chris Bradshaw
Secretary/Secrétaire	Céline Clearwater
Consultant/Conseiller	Michael Audain